

Economic Development Committee

During 2007 the Economic Development Committee, along with Town staff members and others, worked to develop an important revision to the Town's zoning bylaw in order to allow for an expansion of the floor area ratios in effect for industrial properties. Town Meeting implemented this change in 2008.

During the summer months, the EDC and its sister committee, the EDIC were largely inactive. Given that the Town has undertaken a major "visioning" process, it was the opinion of the Committee this fall that this was an opportune time to undertake a reevaluation of the Committee's mission and emphasis. Accordingly several organizational meetings were held to define a list of pertinent questions, goals, objectives, and concerns surrounding the Town's posture with respect to both existing and new commercial and industrial development.

Having developed this list, the Committee invited an array of interested citizens, business leaders, elected officials, Town staff, and others concerned with the issues of commercial development to attend a general brainstorming session in Room 204 of Town Hall. Approximately 20 people came to the meeting, and a lively discussion ensued.

Opinions were expressed with respect to how successful our current process was, whether or not we were heading in the right direction, and how we could take better advantage of the many people who are interested in the impact of economic development on the Town's character and on its tax base.

Out of that public meeting came a consensus as to five "clusters" of activity which would lend themselves to being delegated to as many specialized Teams which would then focus on developing information, interviewing interested parties, making improvements to the Town's marketing focus, seeking avenues for creative financing of development and for the use of tax incentives to stimulate development, and looking for ways to ease the process at Town Hall both for businesses in as well those interested in being in Acton.

We expect to assign individuals to these Teams in January and at that time to also develop a calendar of activity for the Teams through the balance of 2009. In the meanwhile, the Committee has traditionally served as the place where businesses with proposals which might be placed before the Town can come and share their ideas and solicit suggestions for how best to proceed. That very important activity will continue unabated during 2009 as the Committee expects to have a voice in a number of economic development issues which can be expected to arise during the year.